Exercises for Practising Positive Self-Talk

Practising reaffirming self-talk with **repetition over time** is crucial because it helps to **rewire the brain** through a process known as **neuroplasticity**. Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability **to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections** in response to **learning, experience**, and **repeated thoughts or behaviours**.

1. The Mirror Exercise

- **Instructions:** Stand in front of a mirror and speak aloud to yourself using positive affirmations.
- **Goal:** To become comfortable verbalizing positive statements and recognize the impact of self-talk on self-image.
- **Example:** Repeat statements like, *"I am capable of handling challenges,"* or *"I deserve success."*

2. Challenge the Inner Critic

- **Instructions:** Write down common negative thoughts you experience, then challenge them by reframing these thoughts with positive alternatives.
- **Goal:** To identify and replace negative thinking patterns with constructive, positive self-talk.
- **Example:** If you write, *"I always mess things up,"* the reframed thought could be, *"I am learning and improving every day."*

3. Gratitude and Strengths Journal

- **Instructions:** Keep a daily journal where you list three things you are grateful for and three strengths you demonstrated this week or today.
- **Goal:** To focus attention on personal strengths, positive qualities, and achievements, cultivating a mindset of self-appreciation.
- **Example:** *"I handled the meeting well today,"* or *"I'm grateful for my ability to stay calm under pressure."*

4. Positive Reframe Scenarios

- **Instructions:** Think about a common stressful or negative scenario (e.g., failing a test, missing a deadline) and practice reframing the situation with positive self-talk.
- **Goal:** To develop the ability to find empowering perspectives in challenging situations.
- **Example:** *"Even though I missed the deadline, this is a chance for me to learn how to manage my time better."*

5. Affirmation Card Game

- **Instructions:** Create some affirmation cards. Each card contains a positive statement. Draw a card and discuss in a small group (or with a partner or coach) how you could use that affirmation in a real-life situation.
- **Goal:** To internalize affirmations and connect them to practical experiences.
- **Example:** A card might read, *"I am resilient,"* and each partner / coach can discuss how they've shown resilience in the past.

6. Thought Stopping and Replacing

- **Instructions:** Get to know the "thought-stopping" technique: whenever a negative thought arises, you mentally shout "Stop!" and immediately replace it with a positive one.
- **Goal:** To interrupt negative thought patterns and replace them with empowering self-talk.
- **Example:** Replace *"I can't do this"* with *"I'm learning, and I'll get better with practice."*

7. Daily Affirmation Challenge

- **Instructions:** Select or create a positive affirmation and commit to saying it to yourself each morning and evening for a week.
- **Goal:** To build consistency in positive self-talk and observe its impact over time.
- **Example:** *"I am worthy of love and respect"* or *"I have the skills to overcome obstacles."*

8. The Compliment Swap

- **Instructions:** Pair up with a partner or coach. Take turns in giving each other genuine compliments. After receiving the compliment, the partner must respond with a self-affirmation.
- **Goal:** To practice receiving compliments and reinforcing self-worth with positive self-talk.
- **Example:** If the partner says, *"You're really creative,"* the other partner might respond with, *"Yes, I bring unique ideas to the table."*